

09 February 2012

MEMORANDUM

FROM: PERS-432G, LCDR Matt “TOD” Doyle, JO Detailer

TO: Fleet Warfighter

SUBJ: FIRST SHORE TOUR SLATING PROCESS

1. Congratulations on making it through the greatest tour in Naval Aviation. Please read the following guidance to help you understand your shore tour options as we proceed through the slating process.
2. Orders negotiation should begin via phone or email NLT 9 to 12 months from planned rotation date (PRD). Your PRD can be found on your initial orders and is typically 36 months after check in date. It is possible for your PRD to change, so please confirm yours with the XO or CO. Be advised, any extension greater than 3 months will require an official PRD extension request routed through Navy Personnel Command (NPC). Since the slate group is affected by PRD, it is important to agree upon this at the beginning of the process.
3. First shore tour aircrew should plan on filling a production job, defined as any flying job which contributes to the support and manning of the VFA community. Figure 1 lists the current production commands (\*Pilot Only). Actual commands for TPS and SFTI are not listed in Figure 1 since there is a separate application process in which commands are slated. **Please advise me if you will submit a TPS or SFTI application.**

VTM* (VT-7/9)	VFA-106	VFC-111*
VTK* (VT-21/22)	VTP (VT-86/4/10)	VX-31
VMFAT-101	VFA-122	
VFC-13*	VFC-12*	TPS
NSAWC (N5)	VX-9	SFTI

**Figure 1 - Production Billets**

The only non-production jobs available are Pilot Exchange Program (PEP) billets, which currently include Spain, Australia, Canada and Switzerland (FA-18), Langley, Eglin and Kadena AFB (F-15), Hill and Luke AFB (F-16), and England/Scotland (Tornado, Typhoon). Please note that USAF exchange tours are not required to be filled and will only be considered when all production billets are filled. Also, PEP tours, even if located in a foreign country or in a deployable unit are not considered sea duty. Post PEP tour, you will be up for a disassociated sea tour. Certain PEP tours will be preceded by Defense Language Institute to learn the native language.

4. Prior to submitting preferences for the slate, I would like to advise you of the potential career implications. For simplicity, options can be grouped into FRS / TRACOM, PEP / Adversary, NSAWC / VX, and SFTI / TPS.
5. FRS / TRACOM. Instructor duty will always be looked upon favorably by the VFA community. Additionally, both the FRS and TRACOM will offer the chance to compete with a large number of peers, providing the opportunity for excellent FITREP breakouts. Expect an equal emphasis on FRS and TRACOM billets each slate.

6. PEP / Adversary. Although both options offer great flying opportunities in unique locations, effect on FITREP and career must be considered. During a PEP tour, expect a 1 of 1 EP for three years. The effect of that 1 of 1 during your PEP tour can have long term career implications. The adversary squadrons vary more widely in the size of their wardrooms. VFC-12 typically only has 1 or 2 active duty lieutenants which will tend to have the same impact as a PEP tour. VFC-13 and 111, however, have 9-12 lieutenants affording you the opportunity to break out in a considerable summary group as well as the opportunity to fly a different T/M/S in a different location.
7. NSAWC / VX. Tactical flying with large summary groups, both VX and NSAWC offer great flying and career opportunities.
8. SFTI / TPS. Both have excellent flying and education opportunities as well as large summary groups. There is a separate application process which selects based on a number of criteria found in the application message. The selection process determines ultimate command. Timing must be considered so your DH tour is not started late. Application deadlines are released via Navy Message. **You will typically only be permitted to apply to the Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor (SFTI) or Test Pilot School (TPS) programs with application deadlines which fall within your PRD window or earlier. Please start a dialogue early with your front office and myself if you foresee a problem. If you have any questions please contact me and relay your situation – please don't operate under assumptions or gouge.**
  - a) SFTI begins with a 9 week graduate level education in Strike Fighter Tactics at the Navy Fighter Weapon School in Fallon, NV, continues with instructor duty at SFWSP/L, VX-9, TOPGUN or FRS, and ends with a minimum of an 18 month Training Officer tour back in the fleet. There is a two year GREEMAIN upon conclusion of the shore tour. The application process should begin with the squadron SFTI and detailer to ensure timing allows completion of an 18 months Training Officer tour. Figure 2 depicts SFTI class based on PRD group.
  - b) TPS begins with a one year course of study at Navy, Air Force or an overseas Test Pilot School (TPS). After TPS, Direct Entry program aircrew will execute a 30 month tour at VX-23, VX-9 or VX-31 while Co-Op aircrew are allotted time for a Masters Degree in addition to the two year test tour. There is a four year GREEMAIN upon conclusion of TPS. Check timing with the detailer prior to filling out an application. Figure 2 depicts TPS class based on PRD group.

PRD GROUP	TPS CLASS	SFTI CLASS	SLATE
DEC	JAN	JAN	AUG
JAN			
FEB			
MAR	JUL	APR	NOV
APR			
MAY			
JUN	JUL	JUL	MAR
JUL			
AUG			
SEP	JAN	OCT	MAY
OCT			
NOV			

**Figure 2 -PRD / Slate Timeline**

9. The key determinants affecting shore duty are availability, preference, and FITREP.
  - a) Availability – Other than PEP, the number and type of billets will NOT be disclosed prior to the slate. If a desired PEP billet is available in a future slate group, there are two options to compete for it. First, talk with the CO about a PRD extension. Anything more than 3 months will require an official request routed through NPC.
  - b) Preference – It is very important to submit a full, ranked list of preferences from Figure 1 prior to the slate. Include LSO, SFWT, and FCF qualifications expected prior to PRD as well as any amplifying personal information (e.g. family, financial, etc) that will help the slating process.
  - c) FITREP – Once the slate group is finalized, members will be ranked based on high water FITREP. “Ties” are broken based on CO recommendation, submitted preferences, GSA or IA, and aircraft / LSO qualifications. Placement Officers will work closely with COs to see how your FITREP will fall out.
10. Slate. Four times per year (August, November, March, and May), first tour JO’s are slated based on PRD Group (Figure 2). TPS and SFTI selects are determined prior to the slate and will not be considered. Since Placement Officers apportion billets throughout the year there will typically be at least one billet available for every production command. Actual slating is done by the two VFA Detailers and two VFA Placement Officers. The ranked list is placed on a whiteboard and the #1 person will get their #1 choice. After the first selection, first available choice in rank order continues all the way through last selection. Once the list is complete, LSO apportionment, EFM, quality spread and PCS money impacts are noted and adjustments are made as required.
11. Orders notification. Once the slate has been approved within NPC, COs will be notified of the results. Expect a call to the Skippers office to learn about the upcoming orders. Orders length will be 36 month if going PEP or staying at TOPGUN, 33 months for FRS, TRACOM, NSAWC, VX, VFC, SFWSL or SFWSP.
12. Hopefully, this has helped shape expectations by explaining how the slating process works. Call any time with questions or concerns.
13. Fly safe and enjoy the rest of your fleet tour.

Very Respectfully,

LCDR Matt “TOD” Doyle